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*Office of External Affairs
U.S. Coast Guard*

**U.S. Department of
Homeland Security
United States
Coast Guard**



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Press Release

COTTON PATCH BAYOU - AGRIFOS CONDUCTS EMERGENCY RELEASE

HOUSTON - Agrifos Fertilizer Plant at Cotton Patch Bayou is conducting an emergency release of process water from their facility. The emergency release began Wednesday at noon, when Tropical Storm Humberto threatened to deposit up to 15 inches of rain and have winds up to 60 mph. A controlled release of process water was necessary to prevent a catastrophic failure of the gypsum stacks.

The Environmental Protection Agency, Coast Guard, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration and Texas Commission of Environmental Quality have formed a Unified Command that is overseeing the incident response.

The controlled release will continue until the water has been lowered to a safe level. An estimated 19 million gallons of low pH water has been released since noon Wednesday into the Houston Ship Channel.

The , EPA, Coast Guard, TCEQ and Agrifos are conducting damage assessment and pH monitoring within the drainage ditch, Cotton Bayou and the Houston Ship Channel.

Video of the controlled release is available at the NOAA website http://www.epaosc.net/site_profile.asp?site_id=3445

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